

USDA Announces *Ralstonia* Action Plan

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced that it completed the action plan for the eradication of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2.

In February 2003, APHIS confirmed the presence of *Ralstonia Solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 in geraniums in greenhouses in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This is the first time this pathogen has been detected in the United States since 1999.

Ralstonia solanacearum race 3 biovar 2 is a bacterial pathogen that causes common wilt in geraniums and infects numerous solanaceous plants (e.g. tomatoes, eggplant, tobacco, and peppers). It is also a major concern to the potato industry because the disease survives well in cold temperatures and renders potatoes unmarketable.

Currently, inspectors with APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program, working cooperatively with States, are conducting investigations to determine the locations of any infected geraniums. Inspectors will put hold orders, which do not allow for the movement of product, on any potentially infected geraniums or host material. This material will be held in greenhouses for a specific period of time at a prescribed temperature that will facilitate diagnosis of the disease. If *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 is confirmed in any of this material, all infected plants and those within at least one meter will be destroyed and the greenhouses disinfected. PPQ inspectors will determine on a case-by-case basis if additional plants that may have come in contact with infected plants must be destroyed. They will oversee the destruction of plants and the disinfection of facilities.

Specific questions about the *Ralstonia* action plan should be directed to the Federal-State plant health director or State plant regulatory official in your State. Telephone numbers and contact names can be found on the following Web sites:

FEDERAL: www.aphis.usda.gov/travel/aqi.html.

STATE: www.aphis.usda.gov/npb/index.html.

Additional information can also be found on the PPQ Website at www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq.

Note to stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Access the APHIS home page by pointing your Web browser to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>. For additional information on this topic, contact Meghan Thomas at (301)734-3266 or meghan.k.thomas@aphis.usda.gov.

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